

## WHERE TO GET HELP

The L.E.T. Project offers a new service to the public by the District Attorney's Office with lawyers working with schools to get children back in class.

The L.E.T. Project coordinates with other county agencies to address the truancy problem in San Bernardino County. Through these partnerships, each department's program is enhanced and the residents of the County are better served. Because truancy is a problem where everyone loses, it is critical that we all work together to resolve it. The L.E.T. Project makes this possible.

Some of the agencies that can help are listed below.

Probation Department – 909-387-8310

Superintendent of Schools – 909-387-4209

Children's Network – 909-387-8966

Human Services – 909-387-4764

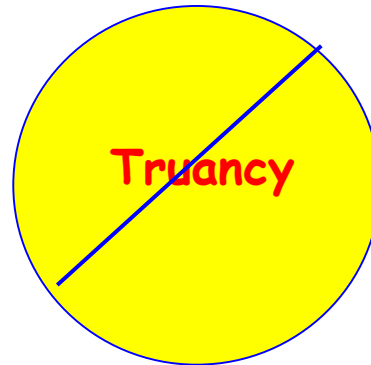
**\* The L.E.T. Project is a State-funded grant program**

## D.A. TRUANCY UNITS

Rancho Cucamonga 909 945 6013

Victorville 760 951 3400

San Bernardino 909 387 6979



### **San Bernardino County District Attorney**

316 N. Mountain View Ave.  
San Bernardino, CA 92415  
Phone 387-8309  
Fax 909-387-6313

# LET'S END TRUANCY "The L.E.T. Project"



Produced by the San Bernardino  
County District Attorney's  
Truancy Units

Michael A. Ramos

District Attorney

January 2003

## TRUANCY

San Bernardino County has a serious problem with truancy. Truancy leaves a legacy of economic turmoil and ignorance in its wake. The San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office took a serious look at the problem and discovered it was bigger than expected. Here's what we found:

- Students who drop out of school are more likely to end up in prison.
- The most likely juvenile recidivists were those whose first referrals were truancy, burglary, motor vehicle theft or robbery.
- Truants are found to be at greater risk for becoming involved with gangs, drugs, alcohol or violence. 67% of truants tested positive for drugs at the time they were detained.
- 57% of violent crimes committed by juveniles occur on school days.
- 82% of prisoners today are school drop outs.

## THE PROBLEM

Truancy can no longer be dismissed as the innocent rite of passage that it was once considered. It impacts society on several levels:

- Students
- Schools
- Law enforcement
- The Community

Truancy is often a "gateway" to juvenile delinquency, and a lifetime of crime. It is also very important to the law enforcement community. In fact, over 78% of current state prisoners had truancy listed as their first delinquent act.

Kids who stay in school have better job opportunities, better self-esteem and are less likely to be involved in crime – either as perpetrators or victims. The community, too, is negatively impacted by truancy. Truancy rates and vandalism and burglary rates are directly proportional. Truancy is also expensive and taxpayers are left paying the bill. Schools lose, too, when children are truant through lost state and federal funding for unexcused absences.

## THE PROGRAM

The L.E.T. Project was developed by the District Attorney's Office to work with the school districts, the Probation Department, law enforcement and social service Agencies to deal with truancy.

The goal is to keep kids in school – not to prosecute them - and resolve the problems that lead to truancy. Towards those ends, the L.E.T. Manual was created. The L.E.T. Project is an effort to reach the at-risk truant and the manual acts as an educational tool for both the truant and the parent.

The second "front" is to have Deputy District Attorneys meet with the parents of chronic truants and their parents. The attorneys spell out the exact consequences of further truant behavior. These meetings occur on-site at the schools and involve school personnel. Some parents don't know it is their legal obligation to send their children to school and failure to do so can be a crime.

Finally, the third "front" in the District Attorney's plan is to prosecute cases against those students or parents, in the case of younger students, who still refuse to go to school or fail to make sure their children go to school.